

LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. – 23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) A wireless consumer transaction system for carrying out consumer transactions at a point-of-sale establishment, comprising:

a wireless station affiliated with a point-of sale system, said wireless station ~~located within a region of coverage of a cellular network, said wireless station~~ configured to automatically detect the presence of a wireless handheld device within a microcellular region, and to convey a menu of user options to the wireless handheld device;

a local computer configured to convey, via the wireless station, a menu of user options to the wireless handheld device, to receive, via the wireless station, responsive user selections ~~entered using~~ from the wireless handheld device, and to determine a point-of-sale transaction price based upon said user selections;

a ~~remote~~ network interface for communicating with a remote processing center to obtain approval for a point-of-sale transaction; and

a point-of-sale terminal communicatively coupled to said computer, said point-of-sale terminal displaying an indication of whether the point-of-sale transaction was approved by the remote processing center.

25. (Original) The wireless communication system of claim 24, wherein said wireless station is configured to communicate according to a plurality of different cellular protocols.

26. (Original) The wireless communication system of claim 24, wherein detection of said wireless cellular device by said wireless station triggers said wireless station to initiate an exchange of point-of-sale information with said wireless cellular device.

27. (Original) The wireless communication system of claim 24, wherein said remote processing center automatically accesses a remote user account associated with the wireless cellular device in response to receiving the request for approval of a point-of-sale transaction.

28. (Original) The wireless communication system of claim 27, wherein said remote processing center automatically deducts an amount of funds from said remote user account sufficient to cover the transaction price of the point-of-sale transaction.

29. (Original) The wireless communication system of claim 28, wherein said remote processing center authenticates the user or wireless cellular device before approving the point-of-sale transaction.

30. (Original) The wireless communication system of claim 29, wherein said remote processing center uses a mobile equipment identifier associated with the wireless cellular device in connection with authentication.

31. (Original) The wireless communication system of claim 29, wherein said remote processing center uses a password entered by the user via said wireless cellular device in connection with authentication.

32. (Original) The wireless communication system of claim 24, wherein said wireless handheld device comprises a cellular telephone.

33. (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating consumer transactions at a point-of-sale system affiliated with a point-of-sale establishment, the method comprising the steps of:

automatically detecting, at a wireless station associated with the point-of-sale system, the presence of the wireless handheld device;

automatically establishing communication between the wireless station and the wireless handheld device;

transmitting, via the wireless station, a menu of options for presentation on a display portion of the wireless handheld device;

receiving from the wireless handheld device, via the wireless station, one or more responsive user selections;

determining a transaction price based upon the user selections;

triggering an automated transaction with a remote processing center,
whereby funds in a user account associated with the remote processing center are
utilized to purchase the user selections at the point-of-sale establishment;

automatically receiving, at the point-of-sale system, a point-of-sale
transaction approval message from the remote processing center;

displaying an indication of the point-of-sale transaction approval at a point-of-
sale terminal; and

durably storing a record of the point-of-sale transaction for later access.

34. (Original) The method of claim 33, wherein said user account is
accessible through any of a plurality of point-of-sale systems, said user account
being available for funding purchases at any of the point-of-sale systems.

35. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 33, wherein said wireless
station ~~obtains~~ is configured to obtain, via the wireless station, a user password
and/or mobile equipment identifier associated with the wireless handheld device, for
authentication by the remote processing center.

36. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 33, wherein the user
options comprise a list of food items available for purchase at the point-of-sale
~~terminal~~ establishment.

37. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 33, wherein said step of
automatically detecting the presence of the wireless handheld device comprises

automatically detecting, at said wireless station, activity of the wireless handheld device in communicating with a ~~general-purpose~~ separate cellular network.

38. (New) The method of claim 33, further comprising the steps of
transmitting a transaction initiation request via the wireless station prompting the user to initiate a point-of-sale transaction;
receiving a user-entered response from the wireless handheld device via the wireless station; and
performing the step of transmitting said menu of options to the wireless handheld device in response thereto.

39. (New) The method of claim 38, wherein said transaction initiation request identifies the point-of-sale establishment.

40. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein said transaction initiation request further identifies a geographic location of the point-of-sale establishment.

41. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein said user account is accessible through any of a plurality of point-of-sale systems, each of said point-of-sale systems configured to automatically detect the transient presence of the wireless handheld device, the method further comprising the steps of:
transmitting a plurality of transaction initiation requests to the wireless handheld device, each of said transaction initiation requests transmitted by a point-of-sale system when the wireless handheld device is detected by the point-of-sale

system, and each of said transaction initiation requests prompting the user to initiate a point-of-sale transaction; and

receiving a user-entered response from the wireless handheld device at one of the point-of-sale systems;

wherein the wireless handheld device is configured to allow the user thereof to scroll among the different transaction initiation requests.

42. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein each of said transaction initiation requests identifies its associated point-of-sale establishment.

43. (New) The method of claim 42, wherein one or more of said transaction initiation requests further identifies a geographic location of its associated point-of-sale establishment.

44. (New) A wireless consumer transaction system for carrying out consumer transactions at a point-of-sale establishment, comprising:

a local wireless station affiliated with a point-of-sale system for automatically detecting the transient presence of wireless cellular devices and initiating communication therewith;

a computer communicatively coupled to the local wireless station, said computer configured to convey a menu of user options to the wireless cellular devices via the local wireless station, to receive and store responsive user selections via the local wireless station, and to determine a point-of-sale transaction price based upon said user selections; and

a point-of-sale terminal communicatively coupled to said computer, wherein said computer conveys the point-of-sale transaction price and/or related transaction data to said point-of-sale terminal.

45. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 44, further comprising a remote interface for communicating with a remote processing center, whereby said computer sends a request for point-of-sale transaction approval to said remote processing center and receives a point-of-sale transaction approval response from said remote processing center in response to a request by a user to carry out a point-of-sale transaction, wherein said computer conveys a point-of-sale transaction approval indication to said point-of-sale terminal in response to said point-of-sale transaction approval response.

46. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 45, wherein said remote processing center includes a user account from which a user may automatically draw funds for purchasing goods or services offered through the point-of-sale establishment.

47. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 46, wherein the remote processing center is configured to permit a user to add additional funds to the user account through a user-initiated electronic transfer.

48. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 46, wherein said remote processing center automatically deducts the transaction price from the user's account upon approval of the point-of-sale transaction.

49. (New) The wireless communication system of claim 46, wherein said remote processing center authenticates the user or wireless cellular device before approving the point-of-sale transaction.

50. (New) The wireless communication system of claim 49, wherein said remote processing center uses a mobile equipment identifier associated with the wireless cellular device in connection with authentication.

51. (New) The wireless communication system of claim 49, wherein said remote processing center uses a password entered by the user via said wireless cellular device in connection with authentication.

52. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 44, wherein said wireless cellular devices include cellular telephones.

53. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 44, wherein said local wireless station comprises a short-range wireless transceiver covering a microcellular region overlapping with the coverage area of a separate cellular network with which said wireless cellular devices are registered.

54. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 53, wherein said local wireless station is configured to automatically detect the transient presence of the wireless cellular devices by:

monitoring one or more frequencies and/or channels utilized by a base station of the separate cellular network, said base station having a coverage area overlapping with said microcellular region; and

detecting communications between the wireless cellular devices and said base station on said frequencies and/or channels.

55. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 53, wherein said local wireless station automatically detects the transient presence of the wireless cellular devices by receiving a message from said cellular network that a given wireless cellular device is within or nearby said microcellular region.

56. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 53, wherein, upon detecting a given wireless cellular device, the local wireless station transmits a short message to the wireless cellular device via said base station of the cellular network, said short message being in a standard short message format supported by said cellular network.

57. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 53, wherein, upon detecting a wireless cellular device, the local wireless station communicates with the wireless cellular device over a frequency or channel not utilized by said base station.

58. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 44, wherein said computer is configured to automatically convey the user selections for display on a local terminal, other than a sales terminal, to facilitate fulfillment of the user's request at the point-of-sale establishment.

59. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 44, wherein said computer is configured to automatically initiate authentication a user of a wireless cellular device, said authentication based at least in part upon a mobile equipment identifier associated with the wireless cellular device.

60. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 44, wherein said computer is configured to authenticate a user of a wireless cellular device at least in part based on a user-entered password conveyed to the computer via said local wireless station.

61. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 44, wherein said menu of user options includes a list of items selectable for purchase.

62. (New) The wireless consumer transaction system of claim 61, wherein said items selectable for purchase include a plurality of food items, said food items being physically available at the point-of-sale establishment associated with said point-of-sale terminal.

63. (New) A method for carrying out consumer transactions at a point-of-sale establishment, comprising the steps of:

automatically detecting, at a local wireless station affiliated with a point-of-sale system, the transient presence of a wireless cellular device within proximity of the wireless station;

automatically initiating communication from the point-of-sale system to the wireless cellular device via the local wireless station;

receiving at the point-of-sale system, via the local wireless station, a user response entered at the wireless cellular device;

automatically conveying a menu of user options to the wireless cellular device via the local wireless station;

receiving and storing, at said point-of-sale system, user selections transmitted from the wireless cellular device via the local wireless station; and

determining a point-of-sale transaction price based upon said user selections.

64. (New) The method of claim 63, wherein said wireless cellular device comprises a cellular telephone.

65. (New) The method of claim 63, further comprising the steps of:
sending, from said point-of-sale system, a request for point-of-sale transaction approval to a remote processing center, said point-of-sale transaction approval including said transaction price;

receiving, at said point-of-sale system, a point-of-sale transaction approval response from said remote processing center; and

displaying an indication of the point-of-sale transaction approval response on a point-of-sale terminal affiliated with said point-of-sale system.

66. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein said remote processing center automatically deducts the transaction price from the user's account upon approval of the point-of-sale transaction.

67. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein said remote processing center includes a user account from which a user may automatically draw funds for purchasing goods or services offered through the point-of-sale establishment.

68. (New) The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of adding additional funds to the user account maintained at the remote processing center through a user-initiated electronic transfer.

69. (New) The method of claim 67, wherein said remote processing center authenticates the user or wireless cellular device before approving the point-of-sale transaction.

70. (New) The method of claim 69, wherein said remote processing center uses a mobile equipment identifier associated with the wireless cellular device in connection with authentication.

71. (New) The method of claim 69, wherein said remote processing center uses a password entered by the user via said wireless cellular device in connection with authentication.

72. (New) The method of claim 63, wherein said local wireless station comprises a short-range wireless transceiver covering a microcellular region overlapping with the coverage area of a separate cellular network with which the wireless cellular device is registered.

73. (New) The method of claim 72, wherein said local wireless station automatically detects the transient presence of said wireless cellular device by:

- monitoring one or more frequencies and/or channels utilized by a base station of the cellular network, said base station having a coverage area overlapping said microcellular region; and
- detecting communications between the wireless cellular device and said base station on said frequencies and/or channels.

74. (New) The method of claim 72, wherein said local wireless station automatically detects the transient presence of the wireless cellular device by receiving a message from said cellular network that the wireless cellular device is within or nearby said microcellular region.

75. (New) The method of claim 72, further comprising the step of, upon detecting the wireless cellular device, transmitting a short message from the local wireless station to the wireless cellular device via said base station of the cellular network, said short message being in a standard short message format supported by said cellular network.

76. (New) The method of claim 63, further comprising the step of, upon detecting the wireless cellular device, communicating between the local wireless station and said wireless cellular device over a frequency or channel not utilized by the cellular network within the microcellular region.

77. (New) The method of claim 63, further comprising the step of conveying the user selections for display on a point-of-sale terminal, other than a sales terminal, to facilitate fulfillment of the user's request at the point-of-sale establishment.

78. (New) The method of claim 63, further comprising the step of authenticating the user of the wireless cellular device at least in part by using a mobile equipment identifier associated with the wireless cellular device and conveyed to the point-of-sale system via said local wireless station.

79. (New) The method of claim 63, further comprising the step of authenticating the user of the wireless cellular device at least in part by using a password entered by the user via the wireless cellular device and conveyed to the point-of-sale system via said local wireless station.

80. (New) The method of claim 63, wherein said menu of user options includes a list of items selectable for purchase.

81. (New) The method of claim 80, wherein said items selectable for purchase include a plurality of food items, said food items being physically available at the point-of-sale establishment associated with said point-of-sale terminal.

82. (New) The method of claim 63, further comprising the step of conveying the point-of-sale transaction price and/or related transaction data to a point-of-sale terminal for display thereon.